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ABSTRACT

This procedural guide is designed for program operators and service providers who are cognizant of the potential advantages of articulation and are interested in beginning or expanding articulation efforts. The guide's first section explains the various forms of articulation and reviews briefly benefits and barriers. Other sections introduce the importance of formal agreements and plans and deal with planning processes, financial considerations, and strategies for marketing. The guide covers in some detail the specific development of an articulated program, including the process of meshing competencies and courses, implementing the program, and suggestions for evaluation. The final section recommends specific duties for all involved personnel, from instructors and counselors to deans and superintendent designees. Appendixes include an articulation agreement form, contacts for three flagship articulation programs for further assistance, a form for an articulation course competency analysis, an articulation plan form, and list of seven references. (YLB)

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PREFACE

This guidebook is a companion piece to the Council's Statewide Inventory of Articulation and Coordination agreements, Commonwealth Connections: An Inventory of Inter-System Vocational Education Agreements. It should also be read with our report on the role of articulation, which emphasizes development of the workforce and is entitled Occupational and Educational Trends: The Need for Program Articulation.

These works were all part of the Council's Dialogue Project intended to promote and facilitate greater coordination within education - between the secondary and postsecondary levels - and between education and employment training. This project and these documents were made possible by a grant from the Massachusetts Board of Education.

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UNDERSTANDING CURRICULUM ARTICULATION

Educational trends usually change when there is widespread recognition of an unmet need. During this decade, it has become apparent that there is a need to create a partnership between secondary and postsecondary occupational programs. As the demand for technically trained and "smart workers" continues to grow, it becomes increasingly crucial for educational institutions to devise strategies to achieve such partnerships.

Articulation of curriculum between secondary and postsecondary programs has been recognized as a valuable means to better prepare students for the workplace of today and tomorrow. This booklet is a procedural guide designed for program operators and service providers who are cognizant of the potential advantages of articulation and are interested in beginning or expanding articulation efforts.

Definitions

Articulation can best be described as a process whereby at least two levels of education enter a partnership to develop a sequential curriculum for a specific area of study. Secondary schools and community colleges are the most commonly involved educational institutions. Each level recognizes the competencies attainable at the other level. Ideally, students avoid duplicating subject matter, receive credits for knowledge

already acquired, or are exposed to an increasingly rigorous course of study. There are three distinctive principles along which most articulated programs can be typified:

(A) Time-Shortened Articulation generally refers to programs in which credit for vocational competencies mastered in the secondary vocational program may be transferred and applied to the same competencies required in the community college program without unnecessary duplication of time and effort. The time required to complete the community college program is thus shortened. Time-shortened articulation agreements sometimes require the testing of students before credit can be granted and sometimes credits are held in escrow until the student has passed a higher level course at the receiving institution.

(B) Advanced Placement Articulation allows a student to move from a secondary school program to the receiving institution with advanced credits to avoid normally required introductory college courses. Credit is awarded when specified achievement scores established during a review of both programs have been attained.

(C) 2+2 Articulation is a four-year curriculum in which the first two years are taught in grades 11 and 12 of the secondary school and the second two years are taught in grades 13 and 14 of the community college. This type of articulation provides the extra time needed to educate individuals in specialized areas requiring particularly intensive study. There are a variety of jointly developed programs in practice which cannot be truly described as 2+2 because they really involve time shortening principles, making these programs less than four years. For example, some programs involve simultaneous enrollment at the secondary and postsecondary institutions with coursework and credit attainment at each.

Any of these forms of articulation require the same process, which begins with an agreement, followed by development of a plan and regular re-evaluation. The following terms are commonly used to refer to these efforts.

(A) The Articulation Agreement is a formal document signed by both secondary school and community college officials in which both agree to pursue program articulation. The conditions for articulation are specified. Typically, one articulation agreement is signed for each school.

(B) The Articulation Plan is a formal document used to specify which courses at the secondary school are accepted at the community college based on the matching of competencies. Achievement levels and conditions are specified. The document is signed by officials from both schools. An articulation plan is prepared for each individual.

(C) The Articulation Evaluation is a means to self evaluate the success of the program at meeting institutional and student goals as well as a planning tool for fine-tuning the articulation agreement and plan.

Benefits

Benefits derived from articulation programs develop slowly and, in the beginning, take the form of open communication and cooperation. The number of students who take advantage of this opportunity will be small at first, until the successful experiences of participating students become known. Potential benefits to the participating institutions and their students include:

(A) Institution -

1) Increased enrollment and graduation at the secondary level and in upper level classes at the postsecondary level,

2) Increased and streamlined utilization of facilities and faculty,

3) Improved recruitment,

4) Enhanced public relations,

5) Shared instructional costs,

6) Clearer points of linkage to the employment training system;

(B) Students -

1) Reduced duration of schooling,

2) Advanced skills acquisition,

3) Reduced schooling costs,

4) Curriculum duplication avoided,

5) Improved and expanded career skills,

6) Improved job placement and career opportunities,

7) Enhanced self-confidence and self-esteem.

Barriers and Pitfalls

Across the nation, "turfism" is one of the most talked about barriers to articulation of high school and community college programs. Lack of information, understanding and experience with articulation often foster this unfortunate circumstance. It should be remembered that these two levels of the educational system are not in competition for the same students, and therefore mutual cooperation can provide maximal benefit to students while ensuring that the integrity of each program is respected.

Many high school instructors are naturally concerned about being required to consistently educate students at a predetermined level and then having their work judged by college faculty. Community college instructors, on the other hand, often have initial concerns about the competence of incoming students who have received credit for beginning courses. Open communication, trust, cooperation and experience help to reduce apprehension and misunderstanding.

Overly ambitious plans and expectations are difficult to sustain over a long period of time. If articulation is to

become an accepted way of doing business, it must receive a long-term commitment from the participating institutions.

Articulation may have limited success when forced upon reluctant faculty members. It is essential that concepts, expectations and benefits are clearly understood. A good place to start is with those programs in which faculty members show an interest in articulation. Likewise, leadership and support must exist at the top of the institution's hierarchy.

Determination of the competencies or courses to be articulated should be conservative in the initial stages of articulating curricula. The degree of articulation will vary from program to program and should be built over a period of time, based on experience and success. A natural tendency is to want to work out the details of articulation in a large group so that all parties can have equal input and also so as to save time. There are times when large group meetings can be useful if group leadership is available. Too often, though, large groups cannot reach agreement on the details required for articulation efforts. Most details for articulation can best be worked out in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. Lack of communication at any level can create problems, and awareness of this fact must be continually kept in mind. Extra effort is required from all parties.

Realistic deadlines should be set in an effort to encourage progress. Articulated program content can become bogged down in the process of setting up meetings, matching competencies and completing paperwork.

Experience with the successful transfer of students will provide the guidance needed after a program of articulation has been in place for a couple of years. All articulation programs require review and re-evaluation.

ESSENTIALS OF AN ARTICULATED PROGRAM

Both secondary and postsecondary educational institutions will inevitably include in their respective curricula some of the same instructional content. Content overlap underscores the need for a carefully planned articulation program for the benefit of both the student and the economy. Since both program levels are prepared to teach students who have no prior vocational education and to equip these students with skills for employment, the challenge is to devise an articulation system that avoids as much duplication of effort as possible.

Most successful secondary and postsecondary articulation programs have several elements in common:

1) Leadership and commitment from the top
2) Early faculty involvement
3) Relationships based on mutual respect and trust
4) Mutual benefits to all partners
5) Written articulation agreements
6) Open, clear and frequent communication
7) Modest initial goals
8) Clearly defined responsibilities
9) Competency-based curricula
10) Mutual goals
11) Strong data bases
12) Regular review and re-evaluation

Mutual commitment to articulation is a prerequisite to its successful development and implementation. Before embarking on articulation activities, it is important to identify the need for and expected benefits of the undertaking. A meeting among the superintendents and presidents interested in participating together is important to

establish joint or compatible goals for articulation and should culminate in a written agreement.

Many institutions informally agree to articulation in a specified area. However, such agreements usually cannot be sustained after the individuals involved in the original agreement or responsible for the program, have left either institution. Additionally, informal agreements are rarely widely or consistently communicated, so that few students are aware of the opportunity. A formal articulation agreement (see Appendix A) is an important basis from which to plan and implement a sequential program of learning (time-shortened, advancement placement, or 2+2).

Planning

Careful and detailed planning is a crucial ingredient for the successful implementation of an articulation program. Data collection and its analysis provide the foundation for thoughtful and informed planning. Useful data includes: labor market demand (current and projected), career ladders needed, population demographics, available education and training programs and their capacity, current enrollments, and available equipment and facilities. In the absence of such information, skill needs will be difficult to project as well as the program content and structure required at the various institutional levels. There also needs to be uniform institutional reporting of program goals, costs, outcomes, student information, and job placement.

During the initial planning stages, someone at an administrative level, such as the deans of the various departments at the community colleges and the department heads at the high schools, should be charged with overall responsibility for coordinating the planning phase of the articulation process. Since the experiences of other articulated systems may provide useful background. There is a wide variety of available literature about programs in operation to aid articulation planners. An early visit to an operating program may be worthwhile investment (see Appendix B).

It is also recommended that a committee of high school and community college personnel be established to assess whether the programs being considered for articulation reflect the occupational needs of the labor market. General education and program advisory committees may be consulted as well as regional employment boards and the State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee.

Once initial planning is complete and a system has been developed, the actual articulation of curriculum begins. Faculty members need to become directly involved. The articulation of curricula usually requires at least a one year period of planning, depending on the number of departments and high school systems involved.

Financial Investment

Articulation between high schools and community colleges is a long term investment. There has to be financial support

provided to compensate individuals for work on articulation programs that exceed their regular work assignment and for travel expenses, supplies and possible fees for consultants.

The initial influx of new students is likely to be small, but it should increase over the years. The college credits or advanced placement gained by students through articulation efforts are usually at the level of first or second semester. Therefore, new students attracted through articulation will likely increase the class size of the upper level courses where additional enrollment is most often needed.

Those articulation systems which make use of existing college materials and procedures will be the least expensive to implement and maintain. Income generated from increased enrollment in the upper level classes should more than offset the expenses incurred, and this is but one of the long term advantages of successful articulation systems.

Promotion and Institutionalization

Once agreements are reached and plans are made, institutions may let implementation fade into the background. Articulation promotion must be an ongoing effort both internally and externally. Local employers, agencies, parents, junior high and middle schools, secondary and post-secondary faculties, and especially students should be regularly informed about the benefits and availability of the program.

ARTICULATING THE CURRICULUM

The most important part of the articulation process is the Articulation Plan. This document delineates to secondary school and community college personnel which school and college curricula are integrated. It is to be used for time-shortened, advanced placement, and 2+2 types of articulation. Copies of the signed Articulation Plan should be kept on file by both the high school and college and reviewed and updated annually.

Each year, the high school department head and college division chairperson should identify priorities for articulation between the institutions. These priorities should be reviewed by both high school and community college instructional staff. Through this review process, particular programs can be designated for articulation thrusts.

After identification of program areas, college division chairpersons and high school department heads should direct articulation by appointing one instructor per program at each level to be responsible for articulating the curriculum. The appointed instructor should be the spokesperson for their department. The college and high school contact people should provide each other necessary basic information, such as phone numbers, schedules, time tables and preferred meeting dates.

Before the first meeting, the designated college and high school instructors should prepare a detailed competency task list which describes the exact content of those courses that have potential for articulation. It is also desirable to

collect other materials which explain course content, such as typical laboratory or classroom projects and exams.

The first meeting should concentrate on getting acquainted with the contents of both programs. Some suggested activities are:

1) Exchange detailed course content documentation;

2) Discuss course content;

3) Resolve questions about content and achievement levels;

4) Explore areas where modifications might be made;

5) Arrange to visit typical classrooms and/or labs in both systems;

6) Compare course competencies by completing an Articulation Course Competency Analysis (see Appendix C).

Several meetings may be necessary to compare programs fully and to agree on which block of competencies in the high school course(s) are equivalent to competencies in the college course(s). Sometimes additional emphasis can be placed on certain competencies to assist a match-up. After agreement has been reached as to which competencies in the high school and college program are equivalent, it should be formalized in an Articulation Plan. Preparation of the Plan should include: attachment of backup materials and approval and signatures of the college division chairperson and school department head or other authorized school representative (See Appendix D).

Once the necessary signatures are affixed, the authorized school coordinator should obtain the Superintendent's signature and send the Plan and back up materials to the college instructor who has been identified as spokesperson for the

particular division. The college instructor is responsible for routing the document through the college system to obtain signatures from the Dean of the Division and the President (structure may vary depending on the institution). The authorized high school coordinator is responsible for obtaining the signature of the Superintendent.

The Dean, in consultation with division chairpersons and school department heads, should prepare an Articulation Chart which will show courses that have been articulated, the grade level requirements and any special conditions. Additionally, promotional literature needs to be designed and produced to develop awareness in students, parents, faculty, and other schools about articulation opportunities and their value. Vehicles to advertise the program include school/college newspapers and catalogues as well as an articulation brochure.

After the articulation program has been fully planned and documented, a manual should be put together consisting of copies of the Agreement, Plan, Chart, Brochure, and associated back-up and support materials. Copies of the manual must be distributed to all relevant personnel at the participating school(s) and college(s). These individuals include:

(A) College -

1) Deans
2) Division Chairpersons
3) Faculty in articulated program areas
4) Department Coordinators
5) Counselors
6) Admissions Staff

(B) School -

1) Principals/Directors
2) Department Heads

3) Faculty in articulated program areas
4) Authorized School Coordinator
5) Guidance Counsellors
6) Guidance Directors

In addition, the Records Office at each participating institution should keep a copy of the Agreement and Plan on file.

IMPLEMENTING THE ARTICULATED PROGRAM

Once the system for articulation is in place, the work of implementation begins. Implementation is highly dependent upon student awareness, interest, and involvement. Therefore, student guidance becomes key. Counselors at both institutional levels have important roles. The high school counselor and appropriate faculty members need to explain to their students the benefits, process, and requirements associated with community college credit, advanced placement, or 2+2 opportunities. The Articulation Brochure and Chart are excellent resources to assist explanation. Students enrolled in high school and interested in an articulated program of study should be provided guidance to clarify the following requirements:

1) Courses for which credit or advanced standing is granted must be a part of the student's degree plan at the community college.

2) The student must meet all college admissions requirements.

3) The student must provide the college records office an official high school transcript showing that he/she has graduated.

4) The student must meet the required grade average and any special conditions required in the Articulation Plan.

5) The student can start the process early by making an appointment with a counselor at the community college. He/she should bring an official copy of the high school transcript. The counselor can initiate a degree plan for the student.

6) Students may be required to enroll within an academic year (after high school graduation) in

order to get credit for articulated high school courses completed.

At the college level, counselors and appropriate faculty members need to follow through and aid students interested in pursuing articulation rewards. School and college recruitment activities and events should always include reference to articulation opportunities.

REVIEW AND EVALUATION

The Articulation Agreement should contain a provision for at least a biennial review of all articulated programs with the public school. It is assumed under normal circumstances that all Articulation Plans would be continued. In those cases where course changes are indicated or a problem is identified, a change in the Plan may be required.

An overall evaluation of the articulation system should be based primarily on the success of those students who enter the respective college programs. Another aspect for consideration is the number of students who enroll in the program. Care must be taken to distinguish between normal reasons for dropping out of a program as opposed to difficulties created as a result of the awarding of advanced credit or placement. The proportion of the student body who take advantage of the articulated program will be small in the beginning, but can be expected to increase each year. Secondary schools additionally may evaluate the effects of articulation on reducing dropout rates and increasing students' enrollment in postsecondary education.

Data for evaluation purposes can be generated on the computer at the college. Computer generated reports should contain personal data for the student, the name of the high school, student grades and academic information. Related information, such as the total number of students who enrolled in articulated courses, can also be used.

The information contained in the data-based report should be used in the process of evaluating the success of the Articulation Plan and for recommending continuation or modification. Year by year accumulation of data will improve its usefulness. The following measures are recommended for evaluation purposes:

1) Total number of articulated program areas;

2) Changes in the number of program areas available for credit or advanced standing;

3) Dropout rates as compared to other students within a college department or high school class;

4) Grades earned in college departmental or high school courses which are required in the degree plan;

5) Total course load taken by the student;

6) Changes in enrollment figures or patterns at the college or high school level associated with student interest in articulation;

7) Number of students participating in an articulated program of study.

The division chairperson and responsible secondary school staff should request a computer generated report for articulation each year. Accumulated data should be made available to the appropriate contact people at each educational level. The division chairperson and secondary department heads should analyze the report with the assistance of the departmental coordinators and authorized school coordinator. Then, the department coordinator should contact those students who have received a failing grade in other departmental courses. The school department head or appropriate contact person and the departmental coordinator should decide if any

action is necessary. The information which is acquired as a result of the report and related activities should be used to establish priorities for the following year.

PERSONNEL RESPONSIBILITIES

In summation, a successfully articulated system requires coordinated input and interaction among a variety of offices and individuals at the participating institutions. The individuals listed below should accept the following responsibilities:

(A) Dean/Superintendent's Designee

1) Accept joint responsibility for articulation programs.

2) Approve incoming completed articulation plans.

3) Oversees distribution of articulation plans, charts, manuals and brochures.

(B) College Division Chair

1) Identifies annual program priorities for articulation in conjunction with the public school contact person.

2) Appoints an instructor(s) from each of those programs identified for articulation to be the program representative for articulation activities.

3) Obtains the name and phone number of corresponding school program representatives and gives it to the college program representatives.

4) Approves and signs the Articulation Plan prior to transferring it to the public school official for approval and signature.

5) Routes updated charts, brochures and other materials to the division and school personnel.

6) Evaluates computer generated articulation reports.

(C) Authorized School Coordinator

1) Works with the division chairperson from the college to establish articulation priorities for the school year.

2) Assists in obtaining the necessary signatures needed for approval of the Articulation Plan.

3) Assures that the signed Articulation Plan is transferred to the college chairperson responsible for the articulation plan.

4) Provides means for the college program representative to contact the high school program representative.

5) Distributes articulation materials to the appropriate high school counselors, faculty, and offices.

(D) Program Development Representative (Minimum of one each per program from both the college and the public school)

1) Attend articulation related meetings as requested.

2) Prepare instructional materials for articulation as needed with the assistance of other program personnel.

3) Meet with school/college counterpart to work out the match among articulation course work.

4) Obtain approval of the Articulation Plan prior to its transference to college and school officials for final approval.

5) Steer the Articulation Plan through the approval process.

(E) Counselor (College and School)

1) Become familiar with the articulation process, benefits, and requirements.

2) Advise students about articulation.

3) Keep open communication with school/college counterpart about articulation activities.

4) Maintain current articulation brochures and charts for use in counseling students.

(F) School Instructor

1) Inform students about the opportunity to acquire credit through articulation.

2) Inform students about the requirements for becoming eligible.

3) Advise the authorized coordinator about course competencies and curriculum offerings.

4) Evaluate articulation program in respect to student progress or problems. Each evaluation becomes part of the general data base.

5) Recommend improvements and/or changes.

(G) College Instructor

1) Help steer students through their articulation requirements and choices.

2) Evaluate individual student success and add it to the computerized data base.

3) Recommend improvements and/or changes.

APPENDIX A

A R T I C U L A T I O N A G R E E M E N T

COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

AGREEMENT made this _____ day of _____, 19_____, between the Board of Trustees of _____ Community College and _____ High School.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this agreement is to approve the mechanism by which college credit or advanced standing is awarded to students who successfully meet the articulation criteria. Articulation is defined as an agreement by the college and high school that common educational objectives, content, and student competencies exist. Based on the identification of common course content and competencies, an appropriate arrangement can be made to award college credit or advanced standing for those courses for which the student has achieved the competencies required in corresponding college courses. Articulation will be based on specific course content and evaluation criteria agreed upon by both institutions and may also require additional testing or challenge examinations for the award of credit or advanced placement.

AGREEMENT

Under this articulation agreement the following conditions of articulation are hereby set forth:

1. The student must meet all community college admissions requirements and be officially enrolled in the community college to be eligible for credit via articulation.

2. High school students enrolled under the program must graduate from high school before articulation credit or advanced placement can be granted.

3. The student must have completed the high school courses for which articulation credit or advanced placement is being requested within the period of time before the request for credit. Credit for high school courses taken beyond this limit may be granted through petition to the appropriate dean or by prior approval.

4. This agreement shall commence upon the date of execution of this agreement and shall continue until such time as the agreement is terminated.

5. The designated dean or his/her designee will be responsible for evaluating the official high school transcript and recommending articulation credit or advanced standing based on the stated conditions in the applicable Articulation Plan.

6. The student must meet all conditions for articulation credit or advanced placement stated in the specific Articulation Plan which covers the requested courses.

7. This agreement may be terminated in whole or in part by either party giving a full thirty (30) days notice in writing to the other party. However, such termination shall not take effect with regard to students already enrolled, until such time as those students have completed their respective courses of study.

Approval Signatures:

Community College:

Academic Dean:_____

Division Chairperson:_____

High School:

Authorized School Coordinator: _____

Department Chairperson:_____

APPENDIX B

NATIONAL MODELS: WHAT'S WORKING IN THE FIELD

From a national survey conducted by the National Center for Research in Vocational Education on articulation programs a number of cities were selected as having model programs. Among those programs we have selected three that might provide some assistance in establishing articulation programs.

SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

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APPENDIX C

ARTICULATION COURSE COMPETENCY ANALYSIS

(Used in identifying and matching academic competencies between college courses and area high school courses)

COMMUNITY COLLEGE	HIGH SCHOOL
Course Title:_____	School:_____
Course Number:_____	Course Title:_____
Course Contact Hours:_____	Course No:_____Contact hrs:_____
Text Used:_____	Text Used:_____

Check Matches

	Community College Competencies Taught		High School Competencies Taught
____	1.	____	1.
____	2.	____	2.
____	3.	____	3.
____	4.	____	4.
____	5.	____	5.
____	6.	____	6.
____	7.	____	7.
____	8.	____	8.

Summarize which community college or school competencies do not match.

Is there any chance that additional competencies can be added to the high school course analyzed above?

Are there other courses at the high school which contain competencies not covered by this course? If so, which ones?

APPENDIX D

A R T I C U L A T I O N P L A N

COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Division: _____

Name of Course: _____

The purpose of this instrument is to document the approval of an Articulation Plan for specified courses and/or program in the above noted division between _____ Community College and _____ High School. The approval for articulation credit or advanced placement to be awarded based on this Articulation Plan has been provided for in the Articulation Agreement previously signed by officials from both institutions.

This document provides a mechanism to enable students who have completed specified courses and/or programs at the above mentioned High School under the specific conditions of articulation to be granted college credit or advanced placement. The course(s) articulated via this document are:

High School Course Name and Number	Grades Awarded	CC Course Name and Number	Credit Hours Awarded

The conditions of the Articulation Plan were formulated through meetings with representatives from both institutions based on an agreement of evaluation criteria, course content and exit competencies. Under the articulation agreement, the following conditions (along with those included in the Articulation Agreement) are hereby set forth:

1. The student must meet all community college admissions requirements and be officially enrolled in order to be eligible for credit via articulation.

2. The student must have an official high school transcript on file with the community college.

3. The student must meet all conditions for articulation credit and advanced placement stated in the specific Articulation Plan which covers the requested courses.

4. The student must have successfully completed specific high school course(s) and received a grade of _____ or better in order for credit or advanced placement to be awarded.

5. In addition to the specific conditions outlined above, the following special requirements must be met for the awarding of credit or advanced standing: CHECK HERE IF NONE _____

   EXPLANATION OF SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS _____
   _____
   _____

Attachments:

Course descriptions of high school courses being articulated. Course descriptions of community college courses being articulated. Specific exit competencies for courses being articulated for credit and advanced placement.

Institutional Representatives Approval

By the signatures below, the institution acknowledges a commitment to effectively accommodate the conditions of articulation attached.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES

Academic Dean_____ Division Chairperson_____

HIGH SCHOOL REPRESENTATIVE

Authorized Coordinator_____Department Chairperson_____

REFERENCES

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Parnell, Dale. The Neglected Majority. Washington, DC: Community College Press, 1985.

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